

UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship FAQs - Preparing your application.

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FAQs

I wonder whether some candidates might have difficulty in showing evidence of existing leadership activity, without having had significant funding to help enable that.

There are ways to demonstrate leadership without significant funding. A candidate could have established networks, contributed to or organised events, supported other projects either formally as a Co-I or through taking on informal roles (you might include these contributions in a letter of support). For applicants looking ahead to preparing a proposal in the next 6-12 months, they might want to ask around their networks for these opportunities or create them.

I've heard that a senior academic can apply to the FLF scheme, as long as they are undertaking a change in discipline, arguing that this can make them be considered as early career. Can you confirm this?

Yes this is a possibility. Fellowships can be used to move into a new research and/or innovation area and applicants should clearly articulate the benefits if doing so and how this will enhance their career trajectory. In addition, I would strongly encourage applicants moving into new areas to consider the Person Specification document in Annex A of the guidance for applicants available on the UKRI website.

<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/UKRI-040324-Funding-Opp-FutureLeadersFellowshipsRound9-GuidanceAcademicHostedApplicants.pdf>

Would you advise if a former successful Marie Curie fellow recipient would be eligible and appropriate for the FLF scheme?

As the Scheme is open to applicants across UKRI's remit it means that there is no one single definition we can apply to fairly represent all communities. I would recommend looking at Annex B in our Guidance for Applicants which is available on our website

How usual is it to get the extra 3 years of funding if fellows apply?

Rather than being a competitive funding application, the renewal process is more of a quality assurance point so it would be usual for the fellow to get their additional 3 years of funding.

How often do fellows actually apply for the extra three years?

Submission windows for the additional 3 years open 3 times a year (closing April, July and December). There is some flexibility for fellows to choose which works best for them. Rather than being a competitive funding application, the renewal process is more of a quality assurance point. Some fellows may have decided that the careers have been accelerated already as a result of their fellowship and do not need the fellowship mechanism for the additional 3 years so not all of them apply. It is more likely for fellows to apply than not.

Is there any kind of support for proposal writing/development for potential applicants whose institution has not been successful in this scheme and does not have access to a successful application? are there proposal writing workshops? webinars? youtube videos?

Not currently. Some Fellows have come forward to say they would be willing to discuss applications with prospective Fellows. Please get in touch with Network to be connected with a Future Leaders Fellow, but please note that this is unlikely to include them sharing their proposals which will include sensitive and current research material. Hello@flfdevnet.com

Aside from changes to the application format brought on by the transition from Je-S to the UKRI Funding Service, are there particular changes between rounds 8 and 9, for instance in what panels etc. might be expected to look for?

The phrasing of the assessment criteria has changed slightly to bring it into line with other fellowship type opportunities run on TFS. They are some useful prompt questions for each section which can be found on the funding finder opportunity. However, the general principles of the opportunity remain the same.

Who do we talk to about renewals, tapers to salary, and to discuss budget adjustments for awarded Fellowships?

The UKRI post award team are available to talk to fellows and to advise them on any challenges. FLFpostaward@ukri.org and FLFrenewal@ukri.org

If you are talking about the preference for "big ideas that need 4+3 years"- does that mean that applications that don't need the additional three years are disadvantaged?

You can apply for the four years but it needs to be clear how the FLF offers an opportunity that isn't available from other schemes. If the applicant makes this case convincingly, they won't be disadvantaged.

On the topic of "articulating position in the field"... what's the best way to provide references and citations given there's a very tight word limit?

This is difficult to answer in general terms, but mentioning how the applicant's work has influenced or informed others, which might include invitations to speak or be part of collaborations. This could be included in the letter of support or from partners/collaborators to elaborate on references in the core text which are brief by necessity.

What are the rules on resubmission of an FLF application if it has not been specifically invited

Resubmission of an unchanged proposal to the FLF scheme is not permitted. Previously unsuccessful applicants can apply to subsequent FLF calls provided the proposal addresses feedback from reviewers and the interview panel (where applicable) and will be assessed alongside all other applications to that call without bias. A summary of these 3 amendments and how the feedback has been addressed must be detailed in the application questions. UKRI reserve the right to reject applications that are not deemed to have addressed feedback appropriately. Applicants may not have more than one application into the scheme at the same time (in overlapping funding rounds) and must wait for the outcome of an application before applying again. If an application is withdrawn during or following peer review, applicants may not resubmit to the next funding round.

In the guidance, it states that Co-leads are permitted; however, under the how to apply section there is no Project Co-Lead role, only Research Co-Leads (in the TFS guidance this role is for research and innovation associates who are not eligible to be a project lead or project co-lead). Is this an oversight? Are Project Co-Leads allowed to be included where they bring complementary and different skills to the project?

UKRI are using the research co-lead as this is a fellowship so if the fellow wanted to terminate the project, the research co-lead wouldn't be able to take their place. Co-Leads allowed to be included where they bring complementary and different skills to the project

Is the outline stage back?

No - this may have been from an institution as some are using these as part of their demand management.

Is there information on the interview process?

There are blogs available from other FLFs about their interview experiences - these are linked from our core information sheet.